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REVIEWS

Social Freedom. A Study of the Conflicts between Social Classifications and Personality. By ELSIE CLEWS PARSONS. New York: Putnam, 1915. Pp. iv+106. \$1.00.

A spirited plea for the rights of "personality" as against the irrationality, wastefulness, and repressiveness of such traditional social categories as age, sex, kin, and caste fills the pages of this thin volume. Friendship, freed from merely conventional valuations, should apparently supplant the less free criteria of association (pp. 83-93). "The freest possible contact between personalities will be recognized as the *raison d'être* for society, and to the developing personal relationships will be turned the energies spent in the past upon blocking and hindering them" (p. 105). The attitude of the book may be clearly illustrated from the discussion of the traditional category to which the author gives most attention—sex. She says: "Recognizing its limitations, will not society begin to regard sex relations as purely private relations, no more its business than friendships? . . . Time will be, one ventures to predict, when the sex relationship likewise will come into its rights of privacy, to freedom from direct community control" (pp. 34, 35). "Since mating and parenthood are seen to be theoretically distinguishable, is not any relation of sex, we are asking, to be self-determining, arising and developing according to the natures of the lovers themselves, not to be determined by or in the interests of others, the only test of the relationship, the effect of the one personality upon the other?" (p. 32). The hope of the family, she holds, is not in restraint, but in the recognition of a greater freedom for its members. ". . . Within the family circle none must be kept reluctant or unwilling, none who would leave it either once and for all or merely from time to time" (p. 49).

To the reviewer the standpoint of the book appears as extreme as the one it criticizes. All the author says against the irrational traditional categories is abundantly true. What, then, is the remedy? Her proposal is in effect to go over to the opposite pole of complete individualism. Does not the truth lie outside these two extremes, in a third method, in the substitution of rational and scientific social controls for the old traditional ones? It is striking that in an age of science we so long

hesitate to apply it to the control of human conduct. Do not, in part at least, the old traditional controls represent a more or less blind, prescientific struggle for collective protection against those types of "personality" which have objected to recognizing the limitations imposed upon action by the presence of other personalities which also claim rights?

While much space is given to the analysis of the objectional categories, data being drawn from various anthropological sources, nowhere does the author define her substitute criterion, "personality." Which does she mean by personality—action without constraint, or action under a new scientifically organized control as distinct from the old controls of status? The context appears to indicate the former rather than the latter. Such vagueness of definition is baffling to the student who seeks a method which he can test.

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Poverty the Challenge to the Church. By JOHN SIMPSON PENMAN.

Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1915. Pp. xii+138. \$1.00.

The aim of this brief treatment of poverty is to focus the reader's attention on those preventable causes found in social and economic maladjustment rather than on those inhering in personal and character defect, and, further, to show that a solution of poverty is possible within the present economic system as contrasted with that offered by socialism. The remedies are found in the minimum wage, profit-sharing, and in social legislation covering workmen's compensation, industrial insurance, etc. In discussing these reforms, and in all his treatment of the distribution of wealth, the author recognizes the time element involved, as well as the more sinister fact that their adoption waits upon the good-will of the capitalist and the captain of industry. In the event of the masters proving to be uneducable and unsocial, socialism is the outcome to be expected.

The chapter dealing with the relation of the church to the problem is frankly critical, but not, therefore, without constructive suggestions. In applying the method of the Consumers' League to the purchase of stocks and bonds, and in insistence upon those physical conditions necessary to right living, the author sets a higher standard than now prevails among church people. His counsels are: turn on the light, put justice above philanthropy, support social legislation, buy white securities only, relate the ethics of Jesus to economic life, keep the pulpit